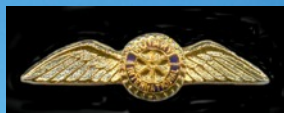


# The Rotating Beacon

The Newsletter of the UK Section of IFFR



January 2011

# *A Letter from the Air-Com!*

*Well, I am just home from London full of the joys of Christmas after attending our very first 'end of season' luncheon. About 40 IFFR members with family and friends joined Catherine and me at the RAF Club. The roast beef was simply perfect, the speeches and toasts entertained us all between courses and Charles Strasser (received by Angus Clark) was presented with the Aircom's IFFR UK Perpetual Award... for the most intrepid trip for the year.... 5800 miles to Tel Aviv and back.*

*The only thing missing yesterday was younger people... how's this for an idea...*

*As all Rotary Clubs across the UK, and probably the world, have a membership average age well into the 60s attracting new younger members is very difficult. What about creating an add-on to IFFR - FIFFR - Friends of IFFR? There would be a few very simple guidelines..*

1. *Not yet joined Rotary*
2. *Must demonstrate/practise a Rotarian 'way of life'*
3. *Must be under 50 and working*
4. *Should have a PPL or similar*
5. *Must be a flying enthusiast*
6. *Must pay the annual membership fee.*

7. *Should try to attend some of the organised rallies.*

*All could be very unofficial for the moment. The Aircom's Goal .... to encourage younger people to fly and to join Rotary. Please e-mail or telephone me with your opinion. If the idea is acceptable we could launch FIFFR at the Newcastle Rally hopefully attracting a number of new Friends.*

*We have a very full programme arranged for this year—see page 11. Not only are there the usual major events I have introduced a series of "Air Commodore's Lunches right across the country. For those of you who find it easier to fly mid week these give a great opportunity for a some informal fellowship. The next UK IFFR Aircom's Perpetual Award Luncheon will be at the RAF Club 128 Piccadilly on the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2011. Put it in the diary now!*

*Wishing you loads of fun flying safely in 2011.*

***Air Com....***

**James Alexander**

**Front Cover: IFFR Member Tom Lackey about to break his own Guinness World Record, in November, for the oldest person to do a 'Loop the Loop' wing walk. Tom, aged 90, has raised over £1.25 million for charity over the last ten years.**

# *Sherburn Sunday Meeting*

September's informal Sunday meeting at Sherburn-in-Elmet proved very popular. Nine aircraft with twenty members and guests made the trip.

After a full Sunday lunch in Sherburn Aero Club's well-appointed club house one of the Club's directors, Richard Maxted, gave us a fascinating history of the airfield.

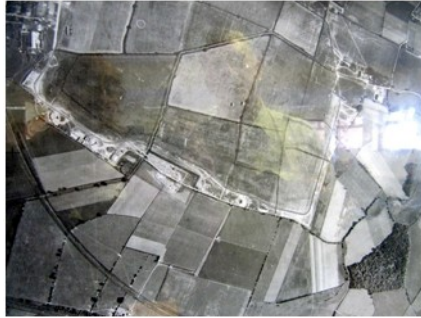
Although I had visited Sherburn many times before I was wholly unaware of its place in history.

The story started in 1926 when the Yorkshire Aero Club moved to Sherburn. Previously the members flew from landing grounds scattered around Yorkshire. The Club left in 1931 but the Yorkshire Aero Club stayed there until 1939.

During the war period the field came into its own. A ferry pool of the Air Transport Auxiliary was

based there. As it was a half way house for the East Coast route to the North the airfield saw a high level of activity. During spells of

bad weather up to 100 aircraft of various types could be dispersed around the field. Hurricanes of nearby Church Fenton were also detached here.



**Find the airfield! Sherburn camouflaged in World War II**

In 1940 the Fairey Swordfish came off the production line of the newly completed Blackburn Aircraft factory adjacent to the field.

1700 Swordfish aircraft were eventually built together with a spares equivalent of a further 1000 aircraft. The Blackburn Botha bomber was also produced at the



**Admiring the Tiger Moth factory.**

From mid 1942 until early 1945 the Airborne Forces Experimental Establishment operated from Sherburn. They were equipped with all the main types of glider and pow-

*Continued on Page 11*

# *Wonderful, Wonderful Copenhagen!!*

“Wonderful, wonderful Copenhagen” goes the song. And indeed it was, as we celebrated a very enjoyable and sociable meeting of the Scandinavian section of IFFR over the August Bank Holiday. Two years ago at the meeting in Telemark we were shown great IFFR friendship and kindness by all those present, and so it was an easy choice, when we saw the programme that Svend Andersen and his team had put together, to book ourselves in en famille.

The last week in August inevitably started with the weatherman making his usual gloomy predictions for the Bank Holiday, but when it looked like he was going to be right, Katie and I flying G-IFFR, and Rodney Spokes and Martin Wellings who were coming in Mar-

tin’s Cessna 182, all decided that a Wednesday start was in order.

With 20kts tailwinds, an easy 2 ½ hour flight from Henlow in good VFR brought us to Groningen in time for a late lunch. Despite rumours of sky high landing fees, we



**The Ritchie Family with Peter and Ellen Wenk from the USA**

were only charged €21 on the day, and had very good service for it. However a further bill for €15 turned up for

“Terminal Charges” a month later. We relaxed in the sun as we waited for the winds at Roskilde, gusting to 40kts, to abate. By 6pm we were good to go and with 30kts on the tail now, we made up time to arrive just after 8, landing just 10 minutes after Rodney and Martin. Henlow to Copenhagen in under 4 ½ hours.

We overnighted in Roskilde, home of the impressive Cathedral in

which repose all their past monarchs (save King Canute who lies in Winchester), and were given our first taste of the eye-watering price of Danish beers. After visiting said Cathedral on Thursday morning, we took the train to Copenhagen, found our hotel and lunched by the harbour.

The meeting started that evening with a harbour dinner cruise and we were delighted to catch up then with Caroline, Emma and Matt (Katie's boyfriend) and John and Patricia Bowden, who had all come commercial, and Ian Kerr and his party who had come direct from Aberdeen, making the long sea crossing in a little under 4 hours.



**Bo Johnsson with wife, Margot, receives the Nordic Aviation Trophy from Audun Johnsen**

Friday morning involved a lengthy inspection of the shops in Strøget, after which we were bussed back out to Roskilde to collect the Friday arrivals. From there, we went to the Viking Museum, housing a collection of genuine Viking ships, and a replica long ship which the

Danes sailed recently to Ireland, retracing the route of their ancestors. We returned to Copenhagen for dinner in an underground restaurant lit solely by candlelight that must have been one of Copenhagen's finest, before being let loose again on the city's nightlife.

On Saturday we were treated to a guided walking tour, seeing sights that most visitors don't get to see, and ending with the Changing of the Guard ceremony at the Royal Palaces. In the afternoon we had a

tour of the city by boat, seeing the spot where the Little Mermaid should be (but wasn't). The evening was spent at the wonderful Tivoli Gardens where we were joined by Michael

Pudney's daughter Emma. After the speeches, and the award of the Nordic Aviation Trophy, which this year went to Bo Johnsson from Sweden, we could stroll the gardens on our own, with the more daring amongst us sampling the rides.

*Continued on Page 10*

## *Lubeck –August 2010*

Meeting other Flying Rotarians is something I always look forward to, whether it is within the UK or abroad. It all started back in 2006 when Angus Clark advertised in the newsletter that he had a vacant seat for the IFFR meeting in Orleans France. I jumped at the chance and had a wonderful weekend. I enjoyed listening to pilots enthusiastically talking about their experiences and the aircraft they fly. Another benefit of IFFR meetings is that it gives you the opportunity to visit towns and cities that would not normally be on your list of holiday destinations. I am not a pilot and not familiar with some of the jargon used by pilots but grateful for the willingness of Flying Rotarians to answer my questions.

I have also flown with Angus in his Robin to Poland, with Ian Kerr in his Cirrus R20 from Scotland to Gotland and with John Bowden in his Beagle Airedale to Cranwell. An E-mail from Ian Kerr introduced me to another IFFR pilot and

informed me that Graham Browning was looking for a passenger to attend the IFFR weekend in Lubeck. Count me in.

Graham flies a F-172M of the Army Flying Association based at Middle Wallop. (Did you know that the F-172 has the highest production run in history with over 43,000 produced and still in production today?)



**UK group at the Gala Dinner**

Graham and I exchanged e-mails, texts and agreed a meeting prior to the flight to update me on the route, refuelling points etc.

Friday 19<sup>th</sup> August 2010

Graham was picking me up at Biggin Hill (EGKB). On arrival he was marshaled to a vacant spot surrounded by a dozen or so biz jets and the RAF Display Hawk.

We were cleared for take off on runway 21 at about 10am and crossed the channel with excellent views of Dunkirk about 40 minutes later. We arrived at Neiderrhein

(EDLV) after 2 hours 20 minutes with the “Follow Me” leading us to our stand. Solid Handling GmbH looked after us very well, providing an excellent lounge with on-line pilot facilities and refreshments.

The second leg to Lubeck-Blanken-

see (EDHL), or Hamburg Lubeck if you are flying with Ryanair, took 2 hours 15 minutes.



**On board the Passat**

Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> August

The day started with a walk to the Niederegger Marzipan factory where we were all provided with a roll of marzipan and taught how to make little animals. Niederegger has been producing the finest quality marzipan since 1806 but I don't think our creations will feature in their list of products. It was good fun and enjoyed by all. The Gala Dinner in the evening was held at the Schabbelhaus, a classic example of Hanseatic architecture dating back to the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August

A five-minute walk and we boarded the riverboat for a gentle sail down the Trave River to the coastal resort of Travemunde where the “Passat” was berthed. The Passat is a four

masted steel barque built in 1911 and sailed its last voyage in 1957. Our guide was a sailor who served on the ship for many years. His extensive knowledge of the history and his perfect English made the tour really interesting.

Back to Lubeck by coach where we had to exit on the outskirts of the town as a gathering of hundreds of Harley Davidson motorcycles paraded through the streets.

The schedule then directed us to Buddenbrock House, which is now a museum for Thomas Mann who won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1929 and is noted for *Death in Venice*, *Doctor Faustus* and *The Magic Mountain*.

In the evening we dined at another interesting venue “Schiffergesellschaft”, an old sailors guild hall, now a restaurant filled with seafaring scenes, elaborate model ships and other memorabilia. The building dated from 1500 and featured dark carved timbers and very long group tables.

*Continued on Page 10*

## *Poitiers in September*

John, our son Harry (18) and I started our trip by flying to Le Havre on the Thursday. We had intended to get to Le Mans but ran out of time. The next morning we had to wait for the weather to clear at both ends before we left for Poitiers. We arrived safely and having slept or kept my eyes shut for most of the journey was told it was beautifully clear at 4500 feet and that Harry's book was really good. We arrived in time to enjoy a super buffet lunch with hundreds of things to choose from.



**The illuminated Eglise Notre Dame  
La Grande**

We were then taken into Poitiers and dropped off about quarter of a mile from our hotel due to road-works. We walked to the hotel, which was set back from the road behind other buildings so it was very peaceful and calm.

Later we met for a walk around the town. This included a garden that also had some small animals and birds to look at. We went to the ramparts and most of us looked over. Some pilots refused to do this

as they are scared of heights! Then it was beer time.

For supper we met in a local restaurant which was enjoyed by all. We then walked to the Eglise Notre Dame La Grande because, at a certain time, it changed colour! Some of the men were more interested in

how it was done and spent their time working this out. It was done by a projector in a building opposite and showed the church in the colours it used to be. It was also used to test John's colour-blindness!

On Saturday we went off to Futuroscope where we were immersed into the world of 3D. We had an escorted tour which unfortunately for Harry took us to all of the educational attractions - birds, space and underwater. After lunch we watched a film about a fledgling postal service across the Andes which, rather worryingly, was about a plane that crashed and how the pilot survived against all odds. Then it was meant to be a show



about Van Gogh but we went off to queue up for a car chase ride in a cinema with moving seats, which was “scary” (me); “exhilarating but tame” (Harry); and “bruising on the ribs” (John). I did ask about Van Gogh but the people who I asked had slept all the way through! The last film was about Louisiana’s wetland, which highlighted the impact of man’s ability to destroy nature inadvertently.

Supper was in an underground restaurant in an old crypt, which was rather warm as all the cooking took place next to us. The food was delicious and got better with

each course. Snails to start with (not delicious to all); duck pancake and an apple and toffee dessert.

At dinner we learnt that Dominique had been appointed Chair of the French section, the first lady to be appointed by a national Section in the world. Jean-Pierre Gabert was awarded a Paul Harris Fellowship for his services to IFFR. Congratulations to both of them.

On Sunday morning there was a walk round the town but we did not

join it as my ankle was playing up. From those who went I understand that the English speaking guide was truly excellent giving fascinating background to the historical status of Poitiers. It had been the provincial capital since Gallo-Roman times and as such, its architectural heritage is outstanding. Pride of place is taken by the cathedral. Its sheer size makes it the most imposing building in Poitiers. Built to-

wards the end of the 12th century by Eleanor of Aquitaine, this Angevin Gothic-style cathedral has an exceptional facade with a rose window and three arched



At the entrance to Futuroscope entry doors.

Then it was another lovely lunch at the airport before we left for Le Mans, our first landing at this historic airfield adjacent to the famous racing circuit. We stayed the night there before returning home the next day.

Many thanks to Joel for organising a great weekend.

**Patricia Bowden**

## *Copenhagen - continued*

*Continued from page 5*

Sunday morning dawned sunny in Copenhagen, but with a forecast of marginal VFR en route. Ian had left on the Saturday, unable to accommodate a delayed return. Rodney and Martin departed for Groningen via the Hamburg direction, but we planned a route due west to Sylt and then across the water via Helgoland to the Dutch border with the aim of going around the worst of the weather. Unfortunately, by the time we reached Helgoland we were inside a carwash and down to 1000' and when Bremen Info gave us the latest Groningen actual it was an easy decision to make a

quick 180 back to Sylt for a pleasant overnight stop. Rodney and Martin made it to Groningen (with an ILS approach), then went on to Ostend that night, arriving home on Monday afternoon.

By Monday morning the weather had moved through, giving us a very pleasant run home, following the coast all the way, with a brief fuel stop at Texel. Again we had 25kts on the tail until the UK. And so ended G-IFFR's first trip abroad since 2007 and a great weekend. Thanks to Svend and all the organisers. I'm sure we will be back.

***George Ritchie***

## *Lubeck - continued*

*Continued from page 7*

Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> August  
Our 10am flight back to Niederrhein was slightly slower due to head winds but we landed to a welcome from the handling staff after 2 hours 35 minutes. Graham engrossed himself in the weather reports and I had a wander through the modern terminal building built in 1997. Ryanair started operations in 2000 and has been extending its route system ever since. On my return Graham updated me on the weather and we departed for Biggin Hill at 4pm local. The journey was

expected to take longer as we had to avoid cumulous clouds and rain. The Channel was clear but we could see banks of clouds over Kent. Still under VFR conditions we followed the Motorway back to Biggin Hill where we landed after a 3 hour 5 minute flight.

Thanks to the German/Austrian Section President Wolfgang Teich and all his team for organizing such an enjoyable weekend and I look forward to Trier and Leipzig in 2011.

***Jim Mundell***

## *Coming events*

March 30	Air Commodore's Lunch	Sywell
April 24 - 26	Weekend in the Lakes	Kendal
April 27	Air Commodore's Lunch	Sleap
May 6 - 8	Italian Section	Turin
May 12 - 15	German – Austrian Section	Trier
May 25	Air Commodore's Lunch	Shobdon
May 27 - 29	Benelux Section	Brugge
June 29	Air Commodore's Lunch	Thirsk
July 22-25	UK Section Main Meeting + AGM	Newcastle
July 27	Air Commodore's Lunch	Welshpool
August 18 - 21	Scandinavian Section	Helsinki
August 25 - 28	German – Austrian Section	Leipzig
August 31	Air Commodore's Lunch	Fife
September 9 - 11	French Section	Lyon

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## *Sherburn - continued*

*Continued from page 3*

ered troop carrying aircraft. In 1943 a most unusual glider, the Baynes Bat, was tested. At that time there was no aircraft large enough to carry a tank. The Bat was in essence a flying wing with an armoured vehicle in the centre area. In the event, although test flights were successful, the project came to naught due to the absence of a suitable tank. Given this exceptional level of activity Sherburn was a high level potential enemy target. To counter this sophisticated camouflage techniques were used to 'hide' the airfield as the photograph on page 3 demonstrates.

After the war The Yorkshire Aero club returned in 1946 before leav-

ing for Leeds in 1958. The Sherburn Aero Club, as we know it today, was formed in 1963. Following the fascinating history lesson Richard then took us on a conducted tour of the hangars where a number of interesting aircraft were housed. The star was undoubtedly a 1941 Tiger Moth which has recently been restored to mint condition.

Following the tour it was back to our aircraft and off home. Richard Maxted had been an excellent host and really made the day. Our thanks go to him and also to Jo and Colin Walker for putting the arrangements together.

***Angus Clark***

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**Rodney Spokes**

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